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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD, JOINT STAFF FOR J5

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/17/2016

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [TT](#)

SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP FOR MAY 17, 2006

CLASSIFIED BY: Elizabeth S. Wharton, Political Officer, Embassy
Dili, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (g)

LIFE IN DILI

¶1. (U) Commercial, transportation, and civic activity in the city are normal. A few roadblocks have been established around the area where the Fretilin Party Congress is taking place. There were 76 seats open on outbound flights. The Australian, British Irish, Korean, New Zealand, Philippines, Portuguese embassies are operating normally. A few Japanese Embassy dependents have departed, but otherwise, that mission also continues to operate normally.

Fretilin Congress Day 1: alkatiri rigs the vote

¶2. (C) Using a cunning procedural move, the Alkatiri block outmaneuvered their opponents by engineering a vote to abolish the secret ballot system that was to have been used in electing the party leadership. In the hand vote that ensued, more than 75 percent of the delegates voted in favor of the change. Ambassador Jose Luis Guterres (Lugu), a group of about ten around him, and a sprinkling of the other delegates voted against. There were also some interesting abstentions, including Ana Pessoa, the Minister for State Administration, who has been a hard-line Alkatiri supporter, but today appeared to be estranged from him and visibly upset about this development. One senior Lugu supporter and former minister summed up the situation by describing the rest of the congress was "meaningless".

LUGU MAY LACK SUPPORT FOR NOMINATION

¶3. (C) More bad news for the Lugu camp may come in the coming days as he attempts to attain the signatures for his nomination. According to an advisor to Lu Olo, candidate nomination signatures have been collected over the last few days and most delegates have already signed the nomination forms for Alkatiri and Lu'olo, leaving so few delegates that Guterres may not even be able to meet the ten percent threshold.

SALSINHA INSECURE AND OUT OF HIS DEPTH

¶4. (C) ODC Rep and EmbOff met with dissident military leader Lt. Salsinha today in the mountain town of Gleno. Clearly insecure and out of his depth in his newfound leadership role, Salsinha renewed the petitioners' demands for the FDTL to lay down their arms before any investigation into the incidents of April 28 or the original complaints of the dismissed soldiers takes place. Salsinha was receptive to suggestions from EmbOffs that he and

his group develop a tiered engagement strategy and allow an initial meeting with GOET officials to take place before further discussion of his group's (unrealistic) demands. He agreed to discuss the proposal with his fellow petitioners, nearly 300 of whom are assembling in Ermera by tomorrow. The Embassy has discussed this issue widely with the government is continuing to facilitate dialogue between this group and the Government and in helping to identify possible confidence building measures and other ways to deescalate.

AMCIT EVACUATION PREPARATIONS

15. (C) Post is continuing to make detailed preparations for the potential evacuation of Amcits. Post has prepared the necessary documents and will continue to coordinate with the Australians to ensure that Post's processing plans mesh with their plans to utilize the Dili Heliport as an Evacuee Handling Center. The Embassy is hosting a town hall meeting for Amcits tomorrow, May 18.

EMBASSY PREPARATIONS

16. (U) -- Beds have been set up on the embassy compound for all mission personnel;
-- Post has stockpiled enough food to support 200 people for 4 days;
-- All mission personnel have been issued radios and post conducted a radio check;
-- Post conducted duck and cover and fire drills on May 16, 2006;
-- The Embassy has 30 days fuel for mission generators.

STEIN